

**RUSSELL LOWER SCHOOL**

**PTA Head teacher’s Report – January 2021**

I would like to start by thanking everyone for your fantastic support this year - under **such** difficult circumstances! Ten months of your PTA ‘term of office’ have been run alongside the Covid pandemic. However, even with this immense challenge you have all gone above and beyond – yet again – to serve the children, staff and community at Russell so incredibly well. I have said it before, but we really do thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your ‘can do’ attitude which has meant we have kept the community spirit alive and well at Russell, as well as so much still being able to happen.

The autumn dress up day at the end of half term was a real success, not only financially, but also as a really lovely ‘event’ which lifted everyone’s spirits just when we really needed it. We also gratefully received your donation of £1000 which we spent on more AR and phonics books which you all also helped to cover too! Thank you.

Christmas could have been a really tough time for everyone with more lockdowns and moving into Tier 4 so soon. However, yet again the PTA came to the rescue with:

* The Big Birley Gift Give Away that gave every family a present
* The incredible virtual Christmas raffle
* The Christmas Tree prize from Woburn Sands Emporium and the volunteers to decorate it making Nathan’s Garden a real ‘centre piece’ to the school
* The selection boxes for the children
* The Round Table float and Paul Birley as Santa
* The virtual Santa visit to the children
* The virtual panto for all children to enjoy

Equally, there are all the things that have also been achieved alongside these:

* Textile bank takings
* Decorative stones and plaque
* Russell Raiders support and pitch ‘renovation’ money being made available
* Fantastic ‘promotional’ items such as posters and posts and even a ‘coming soon’ Uniform Facebook page! Literally, nothing can stop you!

I know there have been many logistical and practical challenges to overcome over the year, and you have faced them with tenacity and determination.

Finally, as I said in my last report, I really do have to say a huge well done for achieving something that no PTA has achieved in my lifetime here, a new shed! That is no mean feat in usual times – let alone during a global pandemic! Well done to all of you.

Everyone has really played their part in the PTA this year. You can see from all the faces in and around school, that everyone has been a fantastic team and given so freely of their time to make everything happen – apparently with ease!

However, I also need to say a special thank you to those of you who have held ‘named roles’ on the committee. Namely:

**The fantastic Joint Chairs** – Amy Galt / Lucienne Mann

**The superb Vice Chair** – Sarah Naunton

**Our wonderful Treasurer** – Nina Page

**Our amazing Secretary** – Jackie Floyd

**The Facebook/Marketing ‘guru’ –** Celia Evans

All the members of the PTA give of their time so freely, and I know this year has been especially challenging – requiring all your problem-solving skills. I am only too aware, that without you all stepping forward, the children, staff and our wider community would not have these enormous benefits discussed.

I also believe the PTA are huge contributors to the Russell ‘feel’ and ‘vibe’, where parents and staff work together to achieve the very best outcomes for the children. I am convinced this is a huge part of the reason we also continue to be such a popular school. We are now oversubscribed with a waiting list in two of our year groups, and have a phenomenal 84+ applications for Foundation Stage in September 2021 just in the first ‘round’ – another record-beating year!

We really hope you know how much we truly appreciate all the hard work you put into your roles, and the wonderfully warm relationships we value so much, and that make you all such a pleasure to ‘work’ with.

With sincere thanks for all you do from the whole Russell Community, particular in a year like no other!

**Nicki Walker, Louise Bunney, Russell Lower School Governors, staff, children and parents.**

**Headteacher**